Recently, world-over Free/Open Source Software has been emerging as a complement to proprietary software and to promote interoperability and offering many benefits to users and developers. Accordingly, Government is initiating Linux India Initiative based on deliberations with various stake-holders including users. This will, among other things, address some of these concerns.

Propagation of Linux system

4982. SHRI S. M. LALJAN BASHA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government held a meeting with 70 people from the industry to discuss the propagation of Linux system;

(b) if so, the objectives of this meeting;

(c) the conclusions arrived at in the meeting; and

(d) the follow up steps being taken by Government after this meeting?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The objective of the meeting was to discuss the relevance and opportunities for Free/Open Source Software (OSS), more specially GNU/Linux in the Indian context. Specific steps such as setting up of Resource Centre(s), Special Interest Groups, suitable provision in procurement policy of Government/ Government Institutions, localisation, R & D, inclusion of these in the Curricula/ Labs of educational institutions specially Engineering Colleges etc. and to arrive at consensual action plan.

(c) and (d) Based on the deliberations of the meeting and follow-up inputs from participants, a proposal for Linux India Initiative was submitted to Planning Commission for budgetary support during 2003-2004 and was submitted as part of DIT's Annual Plan for 2003-2004. The Department of Information Technology (DIT) maintains a stance of strict technology neutrality, platform neutrality and vendor neutrality. It has therefore not prescribed preferential treatment of one over the other. DIT believes that both proprietary and open source software have a large space in the marketplace and the choice must be exercised by each user.